

National Advisory Council Meeting October 25-27, 2022 | The Choctaw Nation, Oklahoma | Panel Speaker Bios

Gary Batton – Chief, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Gary Batton is the 47th Chief of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the third-largest Indian tribe in the United States. He was sworn into office on April 28, 2014.

Batton began working for his tribe in 1987 as a clerk in the Purchasing Department. In 1997, he was appointed to the position of Executive Director of Health, where he oversaw the construction of the first tribally funded health facility in the U.S. and doubled the patient load from 120,000 to over 240,000. Batton also developed partnerships with organizations and governments to add even more services to the health system. The Oklahoma University Health Sciences Center partnership resulted in Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) services being offered at Talihiina and the inception of a specialized care program for high-risk youth with diabetes. A partnership with Eastern Oklahoma State College brought about the establishment of a dental hygienist program, and a coalition with the state of Oklahoma and other Oklahoma tribes led to the establishment of REACH, a program promoting physical activity and reducing the lifetime risks of cardiovascular disease.

As Assistant Chief and among his numerous duties, Batton served as Chairman of the Choctaw Nation Business Committee. His first initiative was the development of an economic plan that consisted of a \$385 million gaming facility expansion in Durant, Grant, McAlester, and Stringtown. This plan boosted the economy in the Choctaw Nation reservation and created more than 700 jobs for the area. Under Batton's guidance, the profitability for all tribal businesses had an overall increase of 69 percent. Batton continues to use the Choctaw Nation brand of faith, family, and culture to guide him as he looks for ways to develop programs and services that will benefit tribal citizens.

[Deanne Criswell](#) – Administrator, FEMA



Ms. Deanne Criswell was unanimously confirmed by the Senate on April 22, 2021, as the 12th Administrator of FEMA. Ms. Criswell is the first woman confirmed to serve as the Administrator, where she leads the nation's efforts in helping people before, during, and after disasters.

She brings with her an extensive career in emergency management with over 27 years of experience at all levels of government and the private sector. Prior to her appointment, Ms. Criswell served as the Commissioner of the New York City Emergency Management Department from 2019 to 2021, where she was responsible for coordinating citywide emergency planning and response for all emergencies.

[Victoria Salinas](#) – Deputy Administrator (Acting), Resilience



Ms. Salinas is an appointee in the Biden-Harris Administration and currently serves at the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) FEMA as the Associate Administrator for Resilience.

FEMA Resilience aims to help communities across the United States equitably adapt, survive, recover and thrive in the face of natural disasters, climate change, and security threats, through a variety of programs that aim to help communities better understand their risk; transfer risk through insurance; and build the capacity to prepare, protect, respond, and recover from disasters.

Christa Montani – Director, Enterprise Analytics



Christa assumed her role as the Director for Enterprise Analytics and Chief Data Officer at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in August 2022. In this role, she is responsible for leading evidence-based, data-driven decision-making across the Agency, working closely with partners from other Federal agency, the private-sector, and other jurisdictions across the nation. Christa joined FEMA in 2013. Her past positions with the Agency include roles as the Director for National Preparedness Assessments, Branch Chief of Continuous Improvement Integration, and Senior Policy Advisor for Field Operations. She has deployed to support communities across the country in response to emergencies such as Hurricanes Irma, Maria, and Michael. Most recently, she assumed senior roles in FEMA's response to COVID-19

and the evacuation of U.S. Citizens, Legal Permanent Residents, and individuals at risk from Afghanistan.

Before joining FEMA, Christa served as a Special Assistant on the White House National Security Council Staff. Her work experience also includes multiple years of contract support to the Department of Defense on efforts designed to counter the effects of weapons of mass destruction.

Christa received her bachelor's degree in Foreign Service ('08) and her Master's degree in Security Studies ('15) from Georgetown University. She's a native of Buffalo, NY and currently resides in Alexandria, VA with her husband, Trey.

Quentin E. Cummings, AICP – FEMA Climate Analytics Lead (Acting)



Quentin Cummings currently serves as the co-chair of the FEMA Future Conditions Data Analytics Workgroup (FCDA-WG), as well as the interagency Fast Track Action Committee (FTAC) on Climate Services. He is detailed to the FEMA Climate Office from the Mitigation Directorate, where he has led their GIS and analytics efforts around Floodplain Management and Insurance (FM&I). He has twice been awarded the FEMA Administrator's Award, in the categories of Innovation and Exemplary Emergency Manager.

Quentin recently graduated from Yale's postgraduate Climate Change and Health Program, is a certified urban planner through the American Planning Association (APA AICP), and a Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) through the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM).

[Joel Doolin](#) – Director, Office of National Assessments and Integration



Joel Doolin is a senior executive at FEMA with 35 years of combined civilian and military service. Mr. Doolin joined FEMA in 2015 as the Agency's number two attorney, where he championed information technology improvements, rebuilt the suspension and debarment program, and oversaw legal support during the 2017 and 2018 seasons.

Reassigned to direct the Agency's strategic priorities, he spearheaded implementation of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act, developed a "Neighbors & Partners" framework for international engagements, and oversaw comprehensive overhauls of the internal governance. He concluded this assignment by leading the interagency coordination of the Defense Production Act during the response to COVID-19. He began his role current role in FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate in June 2020.

Karen Marsh, Chief, Technical Assistance Branch Chief, National Integration Center, National Preparedness Directorate



Ms. Marsh works with state, local, tribal, and territorial partners to improve emergency management capabilities and practices. Technical assistance (TA) support includes the Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool (RAPT), alerts and warnings TA, planning for dam emergencies, strategies to restoring flow of private sector commodities, PrepTalks, and the Climate Risk and Resilience Portal (ClimRR). In her 30-year career at FEMA, Ms. Marsh has also led FEMA's grassroots strategy to increase community preparedness and resilience through increased civic engagement; designed and implemented FEMA's social science research agenda; served as the

Special Assistant to the Associate Director for the Federal Insurance and Mitigation Directorate; and managed the Disaster Housing Program. Before joining public service, Ms. Marsh worked in the private sector as a management consultant and as a product manager in the electronics industry.

Jeff Hansen – Director of Community Protection, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Jeff Hansen serves as the Director of Community Protection for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. He has over 19 years of experience in the Emergency Management and Response field and has responded to numerous disasters and emergencies. Jeff oversees the Department of Emergency Management, the Department of Criminal Justice, and the Office of the Fire Marshal for the Choctaw Nation.

Jeff is a member of the International Association of Emergency Managers. He has also served as the Vice-Chair of the Federal Emergency Management Agency National Advisory Council and the Vice-Chair of the Inter-Tribal Emergency Management Coalition. Mr. Hansen is a veteran of the United States Air Force serving in South Korea and Florida. He also holds a Master of Science Degree from Oklahoma State University in Fire and Emergency Management Administration, is a Certified Emergency Manager through the International Association of Emergency Managers and a graduate of the National Emergency Management Executive Academy at FEMA's Emergency Management Institute.

Kelbie Kennedy, National Tribal Affairs Advocate



As the first tribal political appointee in FEMA history, Kennedy will advise the Administrator and the agency on Tribal Affairs, while working to ensure that FEMA lives up to its treaty and trust responsibilities to Tribal Nations.

Prior to joining FEMA, Ms. Kennedy spent over four years working in Washington, D.C., for the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) as the Policy Manager and Policy Lead for National Security and Community Safety. In her role with NCAI, she worked on national policy issues surrounding tribal emergency management and resilience, tribal homeland security, tribal border issues, violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women, public safety and justice, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and international Indigenous rights. Ms. Kennedy was pivotal in the effort to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act earlier this year, which restored Tribal Nation's criminal jurisdiction over certain crimes.

Kelbie Kennedy is a citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and was born and raised on her Tribal Nation's reservation in Southeast Oklahoma. She received her J.D. and certificate in American Indian Law from the University of Oklahoma, College of Law.

J. Michael Chavarria – Governor, Santa Clara Pueblo and Chairman for the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council



J. Michael Chavarria is a longtime resident and member of Santa Clara Pueblo. Governor Chavarria has served in many roles within the Pueblo of Santa Clara Tribal Government.

J. Michael Chavarria has been elected to the position of Governor for twelve one-year terms, serving in 2006–2008 and then re-elected in 2014–2022. Governor Chavarria also serves in the capacity of the Chairman for the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council. As Governor, Mr. Chavarria continues to work on the various restoration efforts of the Santa Clara Creek watershed stemming from the 2011 Las Conchas Fire and post-fire

flooding impacts, and he advocates for the continuation and growth of tribal programs to protect Pueblo lands, resources, and the environment.

As the forestry director, Governor Chavarria served as the tribal coordinator for the emergency response efforts during the Las Conchas Fire and subsequent flooding events which devastated the Pueblo's natural resources, traditional cultural properties, infrastructure, and threatened homes in the community. Governor Chavarria established a project team of Pueblo departments and other federal entities, including FEMA, U.S Army Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife, Forest Service, and the BIA, as well as the State of New Mexico Homeland Security, to consolidate efforts and establish mitigation and restoration schedules for the Pueblo.

Governor Chavarria has served five terms as the Tribal Co-chair for the EPA Region 6 Tribal Operations Committee. Through this position, he has worked with other tribes in the region to identify issues during the caucus and then pressed the environmental issues of concern during the committee meetings. Governor Chavarria has also used this role to educate Regional Administrators Richard Greene and Al Armendariz on unique aspects of tribal government and history that should inform the federal decision-making process. As Tribal Co-chair Governor Chavarria gathered a tribal team to create the Region 6 Transition Document, which currently serves to educate EPA officials on both a regional and national level.

[Tony Robinson](#) – Administrator, FEMA Region 6



Tony Robinson was selected in January 2013 to serve as the first career Regional Administrator for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency Region 6 office located in Denton, Texas. As Regional Administrator, Mr. Robinson is responsible for the direction and leadership of FEMA's efforts in the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas and 68 federally recognized tribal nations within this geographic area. Under Mr. Robinson's leadership, the Region is awarded and manages over \$1 billion in grant funding each fiscal year to assist Region 6 partners in building capabilities, recovering, and mitigating from disasters.

Mr. Robinson began his federal career in 1985 with the Department of the Army at Fort Belvoir Research and Development Center before joining FEMA in 1987. He has held various leadership positions at Region 6 and in field operations in over 100 Presidentially declared disasters.

Kevin Enloe – Director of Emergency Management, Pittsburg County, Oklahoma



Kevin Enloe is the Director of Pittsburg County Emergency Management in Oklahoma. He has over 8 years of Emergency Management Experience and oversees all phases of Emergency Management within Pittsburg County. He has responded to numerous emergencies and disasters within the state and EMAC response to Hurricanes Harvey, Dorian and Ida. Kevin is the President of the Oklahoma Emergency Management Association and serves on the Homeland Security Region 5 Regional Advisory Committee (RAC). He is a team lead with Oklahoma Disaster Task Force, and serves on the OK First Advisory Committee.

Mr. Enloe is a tribal citizen of the Choctaw Nation and coordinates closely with the Nation on planning, response and recovery initiatives. He has over 20 years as a certified law enforcement officer and 20 years of experience in fire service.

Lindsay Dowell, Staff Attorney, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Lindsay Dowell (Cherokee/Pawnee/Quapaw) has been with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma since 2019 and currently serves as a Staff Attorney in the Government Division advising Choctaw Nation executive branch departments and officials on various matters related to the operation of the Nation, with a primary focus on drafting and reviewing council bills and the Nation's codes, employment, management, education, and sovereignty issues. Lindsay has ten years of experience as in-house counsel for several of the largest federally recognized tribes in the country and is a frequent speaker at events and conferences on the topics of American Indian law and history, tribal

sovereignty, criminal and civil jurisdictional issues, and employment law.

Lindsay is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science, Religious Studies, and History and a graduate of the University of Oklahoma College of Law with a Certificate in Indian Law from the College's Center for the Study of American Indian Law and Policy. Prior to her time at Choctaw Nation, Lindsay worked in the Cherokee Nation's Washington, D.C. Office and was the First Assistant Attorney General for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, where she was the lead in-house attorney for the MCN's \$375 million Margaritaville Expansion and the landmark Murphy case concerning MCN's reservation boundaries.

Paul Downing – Director, Office of Emergency Management, Seminole Tribe of Florida



Mr. Paul Downing is a citizen of the Passamaquoddy Tribe of Indian Township, Maine, and a former Council Member of the Passamaquoddy Joint Tribal Council. Hired by the Seminole Tribe of Florida to be their Director for the Department of Emergency Management in October of 2021, Paul is applying the knowledge and skills to protect a very diverse Tribe that is spread across the State of Florida in 7 distinct reservations. Prior to the move from Maine to Florida, Paul operated his own private company “Bear Tracks EM Solutions” that was contracted by the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point where he served in multiple capacities including Emergency Manager, Tribal Coordinating Officer, and Tribal Authorized Representative for the Executive Branch.

Prior to working for his sister Tribe at Pleasant Point, Paul was the Emergency Manager, Tribal Hazard Mitigation Officer, and Public Safety Coordinator for the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Indian Township. During his time with the Indian Township Tribal Government, he authored The Emergency Operations/All Hazards Plans, the Continuity of Government Plan, the THIRA, and the Hazard Mitigation Plan for Indian Township. Paul retired from the United States Army in 2005, filling the role of a Field First Sergeant and A Large Production Station Commander with the Bangor, Maine Recruiting Company.

Brian Palmer – Assistant Chief, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma



Brian T. Palmer currently serves as the Assistant Chief for the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma. Prior to being elected in 2021, Mr. Palmer began his career with the Seminole Nation in 2007 and has held key operational positions within the tribe’s Commerce, Gaming, and Government divisions. Mr. Palmer also is currently the acting emergency manager for the Seminole Nation which encompasses a jurisdiction of 633 square miles

Tim Zientek – Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Director of Housekeeping, Maintenance, Emergency Management, Homeland Security, Fire & Emergency Communications



Mr. Zientek began his Emergency Management career with the Citizen Potawatomi Nation (population 39,000) in 2000 where he began to work with Federal, State and Local governments on several disasters. Mr. Zientek serves on several focus groups, committees, panels and advisory councils pertaining to emergency management aspects of preparedness and preservation of life and property. He is a member of the Tribal Cadre of Instructors for Emergency Management Institute in Emmitsburg MD and is in his third term of the FEMA

Region 6 Advisory Council. He is a founding member of the Inter-Tribal Emergency Management Coalition (ITEMC) and serves as Chairman for 16 years plus.

Leland Thompson – Fire Chief & Emergency Management Director, Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana



Leland Thompson is from the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana. He is currently the Fire Chief, as well as the Tribe's first Emergency Management Director. In these two roles, he leads the Fire Department in implementing fire safety and education and fire protection, including planning, coordinating, and implementing emergency management strategies.

Leland began his career with the Coushatta Tribal Fire Department in 2008 as a Firefighter/EMT. As he learned more about responding to fire and medical-related emergencies, he also took an interest in how to mitigate emergencies occurring from natural disasters in and around the Tribe's jurisdiction. He was eventually promoted to Assistant Fire Chief in 2011. In 2016, he and a small team coordinated their efforts to develop the Tribe's first FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Bobby Howard – Emergency Management Director, Muscogee Nation



I enlisted in the Oklahoma Army National Guard 15 August 1983 and retired 31 August 2017 with 34 years of service. During this time, I held numerous leadership positions as well as Operational positions. State Operations NCO, 1/45th ADT Command Sergeant Major (Deployed OEF), Chief Emergency Operations Center OKNG, 179th Infantry Battalion Operation Sergeant Major, 45th Infantry Brigade Command Sergeant Major (Deployed OEF), 180th Infantry Battalion Command Sergeant Major (Deployed OEF), 45th Infantry Brigade Operation Sergeant Major. During my 34-year career in the National Guard, I served as a dual status employee working for the Oklahoma National Guard and the OKNG Safety Office. The federal and eventually state positions that I held during my time with the National Guard were Safety Manager and Physical Security Manager. I was the first Director of Emergency Management for the Oklahoma Army National Guard.

Upon retirement, I went to work for The Muscogee (Creek) Nation, which I am a member. During my time with the Nation, I have served as the Nations grant manager and for the last 3 years, I have been the Emergency Management Director. I received my bachelor's degree from the University of Oklahoma and master's from Oklahoma State University. I currently hold appointed positions on the FEMA Public Assistance Steering Committee, FEMA Region 6 Communications Working Group, Oklahoma Department of Homeland Security – Regional Antiterrorism Committee, and I serve as a member of the business board with the Bristow Indian Community.